АНГЛИЙСКИЙ.

CIVIL WAR AND RED TERROR.

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Civil war and red terror.

The capitalist class through its kept press has endeavoured to poison the minds of the workers of all countries against the Bolshevik revolution and the Soviet Government by continued references to the state of «anarchy» reigning in Russia, to the civil war and the «Red Terror».

They are pointing to Russia as a horrible example of what happens when a people are foolish enough to make revolutions. They brand the Soviet Government as brigands for looting the «poor» rich of all their accumulated possessions, and appear horror-stricken at the lurid picture they themselves paint of the wholesale executions that are supposed to be carried out by the Bolsheviks.

Hypocrisy of the accusers.

But even if the situation in Russia were twice as bad as the capitalist press paints it, it would still be sheer hypocrisy for it to pose as being horror-stricken. They point to the civil war in Russia, yet the capitalist class instigated the

most dreadful war in history. Think of the millions of dead and maimed, the ruined fields and cities, the mountains of sorrow and disaster that they have created during the last four and a half years, and the fiendish means they adopted to achieve it, and then ask what right they have to point an accusing finger at Russia.

As for looting—the thieves' conclave that goes by the name of the Peace Conference is preparing to loot Germany on a scale as yet unheard of. It is of course true that had the German capitalists been victorious they would have done the same to the Allied capitalists. This only condemns the capitalist class as a whole.

Revolution and civil war.

Civil war prevails in Russia,—but is that a matter that calls for condemnation? Of course not. Every country has gone through periods of civil war, and will yet go through another period before the Brotherhood of Man is inaugurated. Civil war is the accompaniment to every revolution, and revolutions mark the stages of a nations development. Furthermore, revolutions and civil war are the climax of the constant class struggle that prevails in every nation, through every stage of

its history. Karl Marx, the great founder of modern Socialism said: «history so far has been a series of class struggles», and a study of the history of any nation will prove that he was right. These class struggles will continue until, with the final abolition of capitalism, classes will be abolished. Magna Charta, the Peasant Revolt, the Cromwell Revolution, and the Anti-Corn Law Riots and Reform Acts, mark the periods of revolution and civil war, and the stages of development of English history.

In every stage of a nation's history the methods of producing the means of life employed at the time, determines the political conditions. That class which owns the means of production is the dominant class. The methods of production undergo continuous change. Compare the production of to-day with that of a hundred years ago. As the methods of production change, the class which owns the new means of production strives to attain power, and resorts to violence if it cannot attain that power by peaceful means. The great political changes of history have been accomplished by violence.

Let us take two outstanding examples. In the time of Charles I the demand for wool for the Flemish weaving industry was growing rapidly, and the best market for satisfying that demand was England. But the business of sheep rearing

and wool exportation was hampered by the unchecked impositions of the autocratic King. The Cromwell revolution as is known, was precipitated by the imposition of the ship tax. England was becoming a great merchant country, and a struggle for power went on between the King and the aristocracy on the one hand, and the rising merchant class on the other, which ended in the abolition of autocracy and the enfranchisement of the merchant class: but not until a period of thirty years of civil war had passed.

In the beginning of the 19th century another great economic change took place as a result of the discovery of the power of steam and the invention of machinery. From being largely a trading country England became a manufacturing country, which produced a new class of manufacturers. This class found its business hampered by the protectionist import duties imposed by the ruling class, the landlords and merchants, and thus another struggle for power took place. Although the struggle against the Corn Laws did not take the form of an armed conflict, that period was nevertheless one of the stormiest in England.

The class struggle of to-day.

Throughout the various periods of great political changes the great mass of the people, the

peasants, the journey-men, or factory workers, were always left in their old conditions of servitude, in spite of the fact that the brunt of the fighting fell on their shoulders. Thinking they were fighting for liberty for all, their efforts only resulted in the enfranchisement of the class immediately above them. Immediately that happened there began a fresh struggle between the newly enfranchised ruling class and the workers. This went on until we reached the present capitalist system where there are but two conflicting classes. There is now no other class standing between the workers and the ruling class. With the capture of power by the workers, classes will finally be abolished, and social and economic liberty for all will be established.

There is no need to describe at length the form in which the class-struggle of to-day presents itself. All workers are familiar with the struggles for higher wages, shorter hours, better housing and working conditions, etc. The futility of the attempt to improve permanently the conditions of the working class so long as capitalism is in existence is beginning to be understood by the workers. Increases of wages or reduction of hours seem to have no effect in easing the problems of getting a living or reducing unemployment.

Furthermore, we have seen that capitalism led to the catastrophe of the war, with its terrible loss of life, and destruction, and added further burdens to be borne in the future. It is dawning on the workers that a repetition of such horrors can only be avoided if they themselves take political and economic power. The workers are rising in revolt everywhere. The revolution in Russia, Austria-Hungary, and Germany are the first shattering blows against capitalism. Society is once more going through a period of great economic and political changes: through a period of Revolution.

Class war and revolution in Russia.

Compared with western European countries and America, Russia was a backward country, that is to say, industry had not reached the stage to which it reached in the former countries. The political constitution of Russia was similar to that of France before the Great Revolution, or England before the Cromwell Revolution. Nevertheless capitalist industry had made rapid strides and a large class of factory workers had developed. We had the same evidence of the class struggle in Russia which has been noted in other countries in similar stages of development: the rising capitalist class striving to obtain power on the

backs of the workers. Before the revolution the capitalist parties, as well as the workers in Russia were against the Autocracy. There is this important difference, however, between the class struggle in Russia and that of other countries at the corresponding period of their history. The Russian working class learned from history of the cunning of the capitalist class, and imbibing the teaching of many years of socialist propaganda understood its own historic mission. The class struggle took a two-fold form: the struggle of the capitalist class against the autocracy, and the struggle of the workers against the autocracy and the capitalists. The Russian workers were determined to avert the danger of the oppression of autocracy being overthrown only to give place to the bondage of wage slavery.

Because of its backwardness and the antiquated form and corruption of its Government, Russia was the first to collapse under the burden of the war. The collapse precipitated the revolution. As is known the revolution passed through two stages. First came the overthrow of the Tzar and the stepping into power of the capitalist class, who at that time were prepared to agree to any form of government, from a constitutional monarchy to a republic, so long as they remained in control. The second stage came eight months afterwards—the Bolshevik revolution—which in

turn swept the capitalists out of power, and the government passed into the hands of the workers through the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' deputies. Russian politics in eight months completed a process of development which has not yet been accomplished by the workers of western Europe during a period of more than a hundred years. The workers of the Western countries have yet to abolish the rule of the capitalist class.

The white terror and civil war.

In theory the capture of political power by the workers should mean the abolition of classes, and the cessation of the class struggle. The theory would work out if the capitalists would quietly accept defeat, submit to the new order of things, and become citizens equal with the rest. But the ruling class has never, in any period of history, quietly accepted defeat, and the aftermath of revolution has always been a period of civil war, until that class is physically crushed. It is the overthrown class that instigates civil war. It will fight to the last, and by every and any means to regain its lost position. So it is in Russia. Although the interest of the capitalist class is against the interest of the autocracy, nevertheless, in their opposition to the workers they are united. Tzarist

officers, and capitalists together with their hangers—on, and the ignorant and degraded elements of the people that they can induce or compell to join them, form the bodies of White Guards who strive to overthrow the newly won liberties of the workers.

In order to preserve the fruits of its victory the workers must organise all its forces to resist the attacks of its foes. For that reason the revolution cannot immediately pass into a period of complete freedom. The workers must submit to a revolutionary discipine, they must set up a dictatorship of the working class, and rule with a rod of iron, until the revolution is secured from all danger. The experience in Finland and Ukraine teaches what penalty the workers will have to pay if they fail to hold their gains.

The deposed class will use the most treacherous means to secure its ends. Finding themselves powerless to beat the workers the Russian Tzarists and capitalists invited the Kaiser to send his troops to murder their own fellow countrymen in Finland an Ukraine. Now that the Kaiser is overthrown they with equal cynicism invite the Allied governments to do the same. While posing as lovers of their country, the ex-ruling class will betray their country a hundred times rather than allow the workers and peasants to own and govern it.

Many ex-officers and business men have pretended to accept the new conditions and have expressed their willingness to serve the Soviet Republic. By at first behaving in a most exemplary way they have obtained important positions in the Red Army and have used them to betray their troops to the enemy. The same thing is done in civil occupations, where instead of helping, they invade and create disorganization. Numerous plots have been discovered for the blowing up of bridges, wrecking food trains and of incendiarism. Unfortunately many of these plots have been discovered when too late, and these abominable deeds have been accomplished. Much of the famine and disease prevailing in Russia at present is directly due to the acts of terror of the White Guards.

Who are the terrorists?

In Finland the Whiteguard, with the assistance of German officers, defeated the Finish Red Army and crushed the revolution. The defeated Red Army, together with thousands of working men who took no part in the fighting, but who sympathised with the revolution, were rounded up and placed in concentration camps. Many died in the camps, and ten thousand were taken out and shot. A cold-

blooded brutal massacre, yet it hardly received any mention in the capitalist press.

In January, 1918 during the struggle between the revolutionaries and the Ukrainian Rada under the leadership of Petlura which represented the Ukrainian capitalist class, hundreds of unarmed working men were shot in the street. On the 20th of January the workers of Kiev revolted in anticipation of the capture of the town by the Red Army. The troops of the Rada were lined across the streets and examined the hands of every passer by. Thos whose hands were calloused or toil—hardened were immediately shot. Comrade Gorwitz, a prominent Ukrainian socialist was murdered in Kiev, and in other places the Rada was responsible for the murder of Leonid, Piatakoff, and Pintkofsky, some of the most active Ukrainian socialists, and hundreds and hundreds of workingmen. In fact, the counter revolutionaries were the first to execute prominent representatives of their opponents. The Bolsheviks eventually overthrew the Rada and established a Soviet Government. But the German troops later ihvaded Ukraine, overthrew the Soviet, and established the Hetman Skoropadsky as Dictator. Then commenced an indescribable reign of terror, for the purpose of exterminating Bolshevism. Every Bolshevik that was captured, or any one even suspected of Bolshevik sympathies was put against the wall and shot.

In those districts which the Whiteguards have temporarily seized, a white terror literally prevails: Whenever the Whiteguards enter a city a veritable massacre of working men takes place: for to be a working man means to be a revolutionary. In the Don district where most of the workers are either coal-miners or iron-workers, the workmen were lined up in the streets and every tenth man was shot. In Novo-Rosyisk no less than 16 thousand men, of whom more than half were wounded Red guards, were massacred. Here is an example of whiteguard reasoning: sailors are revolutionaries. Sailors have tattoo marks: therefore every man found with tattoo marks was shot as a revolutionary. The Whiteguards endeavour to conscript the peasants into their forces: any man who makes the slightest demurr is shot on the spot. But all this is not called «terror», it is called «restoring order». The Tzarists and capitalists know only of one means of getting back to power, and that is by exterminating all those who stand in their way.

The working class must adopt all available methods to defend itself, and break the back of the counter-revolution. Under such circumstances to lack resoluteness and decision, to be swayed by a false humanity is treachery to the lives and liberties of the workers. The Red Terror is not an evidence of savagery of revolutionaries:

it is called out by the White Terror of by the ex-ruling class to drag the workers into slavery.

For the solidarity of the human race.

Revolution is hammering at the gates of the Western countries, and soon may be the workers there will be at grips with their exploiters in the final struggle for emancipation. Let them learn, then, from the terrible experience of their Russian fellow-workers. They must not be misguided into believing that revolutions are as pleasant as a picnic. The Social Revolution is the birth of a new era for mankind, and is accompanied by much trial and labour. Let the workers fearlessly enter the struggle strengthened by the consciousness of their noble mission. They must with a firm and ruthless hand suppress all resistance to their power, until with victory assured, the age-long struggle of the classes is brought to an end, and the solidarity of the human race achieved.

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